



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

THE LIVER.—In an article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Dr. William J. Mayo says the liver is the central metabolic laboratory of the human body, responsible for the final preparation of nutritive material for conversion into tissue-building and energizing substances. The weight of the average liver in man is fifty ounces, with a normal variation of about ten per cent. It would appear that the liver cells, in the process of acting on the blood brought to them through the portal circulation, receive nourishment direct and are not indebted to the blood flowing through the hepatic artery for it. The liver has five chief functions: 1. The metabolism of carbohydrates; 2. The metabolism of proteids; 3. The metabolism of fat; 4. The production of bile; 5. The defense against bacteria, protozoa, and toxic chemical substances.

VACCINE IN WHOOPING COUGH.—The *American Journal of the Diseases of Children* records the experience of a Children's Home where one of forty-six inmates developed whooping cough. For a week he mingled with the other children and then was isolated, having previously whooped and vomited. There was also an epidemic of the disease in the city. Thirty-one children who gave no record of having had whooping cough were inoculated, fifty million plain pertussis vaccine (stock) being used for each child. No reactions occurred, only one child complaining of a sore arm. Nearly two months after the first case not another had developed in the Home. Immediately after the diagnosis was made the original case was given one dose of vaccine and ceased to whoop at the end of a week. The dose was not repeated.

CHRONIC DENTAL INFECTION.—A writer in *Paris Medical* says that when the cervical glands enlarge the primary lesion should be looked for in the teeth. If softening has not begun, treatment of the teeth usually will bring about normal conditions in the glands. Ordinary inflammation predisposes to tuberculosis. In chronic septicemia from oral sepsis the physician should insist on the teeth being attended to. If nothing better can be done they should be extracted.

A NEW DEATH TEST.—The *Medical Record* states in an editorial that Lecha-Marzo, an ophthalmologist of Seville, has presented a new and very simple test of death. Within eight hours of death, sometimes as early as within half an hour, the tissues and secretions of

the eye, always alkaline during life, become acid. To perform the test, place a piece of litmus paper on the eyeball, beneath the lids and then compress the lids. In the living subject the paper at once turns blue, when life has departed there is either no change in the paper or a marked rose color appears.

POTASSIUM NITRATE IN CANCER.—Dr. Edward Percy Robinson, New York, urges the use of potassium nitrate in the treatment of cancer. He says cancer is not a thing that can be enucleated as a pea from its pod, or a cyst from its site. It is a condition, dependent entirely upon the factors which first incited the primary stage of inflammation. He believes that acidity is one of these factors, if not the actual factor, and may be produced by an excess of sodium chloride in the plasma and tissues of the body, possibly due to the excessive use of common table salt. The object sought is to replace the sodium chloride in the tissues by potassium chloride and this is obtained by the administration of potassium nitrate. The latter acts chemically by causing actual removal of the sodium elements already in the tissues and their replacement by the potassium elements. At the same time the displaced sodium elements are removed by combination with the nitric acid elements of the potassium nitrate to form sodium nitrate. This double reaction introduces the potassium into the tissues in its most stable form. There appears to be no other salt which serves the same purposes as the nitrate. The death rate of cancer has almost reached the appalling number of one hundred thousand lives yearly; in New York City alone the weekly average is nearly ninety. Any drug which offers the slightest hope in ameliorating this awful scourge is deserving of trial.

RECTAL FEEDING.—An article on this subject in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* says that as there is no proof that the colon possesses adequate digestive capacity all food introduced by way of the rectum should be completely predigested. Flesh and eggs are undesirable because of their tendency to putrefy. Milk is comparatively free from this disadvantage and appears to be the ideal source of protein for a nutritive enema. It should be fresh and unboiled, thoroughly peptonized and pancreatized. It should be skimmed, as fat introduced into the colon is useless and may be harmful. Glucose in solution supplies carbohydrate in an available form. Strained fruit juice may supply desirable salts to a limited extent. Additional salts of sodium and calcium are required if the rectal feeding is prolonged. Explicit prescriptions and directions are given.

CALOMEL AND PRURITUS ANI.—A writer in a Danish medical journal has successfully treated cases of long persisting anal pruritus

by having the region rubbed with dry calomel. The part is wiped with moist cotton, the powder taken upon the moistened finger and rubbed into the crevices. The itching usually ceased permanently, or at least for several months, after four or five applications of calomel.

RAPID CURE OF SCARLET FEVER.—The *Medical Record* mentions that Prof. Alece having derived no marked benefit from serums in the treatment of scarlet fever sought a sterilizing substance like salvarsan. To a basis of chlorophenol he added quinine and camphor. These substances are so combined as to make a stable chemical substance, which is injected into the gluteal muscles. Many cases have now been treated, including very severe ones. The effect produced confirms the author in the belief that the active cause of the disease has been reached. One patient was pronounced cured on the eighth day; in a second, convalescence began on the sixth or seven day. In most cases only three injections were necessary.

PREVENTION OF SPREAD OF EPIDEMIC DISEASE.—In the *British Medical Journal* attention is drawn to the value of steam spraying, nasal douching and gargling in the prevention of epidemics. Carriers of cerebro spinal meningitis have been thus disinfected. The spread of measles has been prevented by a system of nasal douching and gargling with potassium permanganate solution in normal saline, the solution being poured into the palm of the hand and snuffed up each nostril alternately. The fluid which passed down the nasopharynx was spit out. The patient then gargled thoroughly with fresh fluid. A soldier with fever and bronchitis was admitted to an over-crowded ward of forty-six beds. In three days he developed typical measles. Nasal douching was enforced and only one case developed, a V.A.D. nurse, who failed to carry out the measures ordered.

PATENT MEDICINE MISBRANDING.—The *Maryland Medical Journal* says today because of the operation of the Federal Food and Drugs Act, the extravagant promises of cure that characterized the labeling of the patent medicines of ten years ago have practically disappeared. The law requires the labels to declare the presence of any habit-forming drug, such as opium, cocaine or alcohol, thus preventing the innocent developing of drug habits.